

# SDI Connections



Volume 1, Issue 6 - December 2013



**Happy Holidays from all of us at the  
Starkloff Disability Institute**

Colleen Starkloff, David Newburger and the entire staff of the Starkloff Disability Institute wish you the happiest of holiday seasons and thank you for your support in 2013. With your help, SDI is closer to achieving its goal of empowering people with disabilities participate in their communities as equal partners and contributors.

We look forward to accomplishing big things in 2014 and hope you will be by our side on this exciting endeavor. Happy Holidays!

**Max Starkloff Speaker Series - Kathleen Martinez**

The Starkloff Disability Institute has as its mission to create a world that welcomes all people with disabilities by empowering them, by influencing the non-disabled, by serving as liaison between the two groups, and by working toward a goal of economic independence through employment.

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Kathleen Martinez

The Max Starkloff Speaker Series hosted U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor Kathleen Martinez on December 5th, who presented "Strengthening Your Workforce: the Disability Advantage" at the Centene auditorium in Clayton.

The Max Starkloff Speaker Series engages the entire community, broadens viewpoints, and sparks discussion on important topics surrounding disability - just as Max did.

A private meeting for local human resources executives from SDI's role model companies and a VIP reception with Next Big Step Alumni preceded Ms. Martinez' public presentation. Over one hundred area community leaders and citizens attended the general presentation. A question and answer session followed. Martinez, who leads the national Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), primarily spoke about the importance of competitive employment for people with disabilities.

[Continue: Max Starkloff Speaker Series - Kathleen Martinez](#)

## Annual Board of Directors Holiday Lunch

The Starkloff Disability Institute celebrated the season with their 3rd Annual Board of Directors Holiday Lunch held at the Racquet Club Ladue on December 18th. The event was generously sponsored by board members John "Jay" Meier III, Steve Degnan, and Charlie Claggett. Board members, staff, volunteers, Next Big Step Alumni, Max Starkloff Society members, and close friends of SDI shared holiday cheer and a delicious lunch while listening to the achievements of 2013.

Max Starkloff Society President Ray Hartmann presented three awards to individuals who provided exceptional support to SDI in 2013.



Ray Hartmann,  
Josephine Weil, Dick Weil  
  
members of the Max Starkloff Society and continue to give love and

**Dick & Josephine Weil** hosted SDI's 10th Anniversary party in their beautiful garden designed by the late Bob Cassilly. The Weil's home and garden is fully accessible and over a hundred guests, disabled and non-disabled, enjoyed the beautiful setting together. The Weil's generosity to SDI, however, goes back many years. Dick serves on the Board of Directors of SDI and Josephine has provided valuable development and public relations advice. Longtime friends and supporters, Dick and Josephine are



### Quick Links

[Next Big Step](#)

[SDI Blog](#)

[Max Starkloff](#)



Max and Colleen Starkloff

Max and Colleen Starkloff co-founded one of the first ten federally funded independent living centers in the U.S. After 35 successful years, Colleen and Max, along with David Newburger, co-founded the Starkloff Disability Institute to take the **NEXT BIG STEP** - changing attitudes for a more inclusive society.

### Board of Directors

Charles E. Claggett  
Robert Butler  
Charles Carr  
Steve Degnan  
B.W. Durham, Jr.  
Richard Engelsmann  
Daniel B. Feinberg  
Ray Hartmann  
Gina Hilberry  
Brooke James  
David Jones

support in abundance.

**Jean Wasko** began working with SDI in 2007 as a volunteer grant writer. In 2012 she became a paid staff member. She retired from SDI on September 1, 2013, and then turned around and started volunteering for us again! She now works one day a week in the office, and even helps out working from her Belleville home when called upon. With a decade of grant-writing experience at the Missouri History Museum, and a Ph.D. in English, Jean brings immeasurable gifts to SDI. She has built a strong and lasting grant program, and captured the programming at SDI through her beautiful writing.



Ray Hartmann and  
Jean Wasko



Ray Hartmann and  
Charlie Claggett

**Charlie Claggett** is Chairman of the Board of Directors and is the "gift that keeps on giving." He is incredibly engaged in all SDI activities. He meets with Directors David and Colleen on a weekly basis to provide leadership and direction. Charlie has developed countless marketing materials and ideas and is in the final stages of writing a book on the life of Max Starkloff. Charlie leads every board meeting and brings talent, resources, and energy, to the organization. Charlie is the consummate cheerleader and breathes positive energy into SDI. Our mission is strong, and our future is bright with the leadership of Charlie Claggett!

**NEXT BIG STEP - CLASS OF 2014**

## LAST CHANCE TO ENROLL!!!

SDI is now accepting applications for the Class of 2014. As part of the Next Big Step employment initiative, the Class of 2014 is a 15-week job-readiness program that empowers people with disabilities to become more competitive job-seekers.

Class participants will learn to:

- Write resumes that capture the attention of recruiters
- Effectively and confidently address the toughest questions of the job interview

Brent Layton  
Cornelius ("Con") McGrath  
Lisa D. McLaughlin  
John J. Meier, III  
David J. Newburger  
William B. Sheldon  
Colleen Kelly Starkloff  
Susan Stith  
Jeffrey Tucker  
Philip von Gontard  
Richard Weil

- Activate strategies to change personal barriers and manage societal barriers to job attainment
- Increase the number of contacts in their network pool
- Identify rights and responsibilities of the employer and employee regarding the laws governing the employment of people with disabilities
- State confidently a plan for "if, when and how" to disclose and explain their disability
- Use the web and social media to their advantage during the job search

This is a power-packed program that offers the insights and skills of the area's top human resource Executives. This program has proven successful! Nearly 70% of program participants have been offered paid positions of their choice.

SDI offers this class at no cost to participants. Seating is extremely limited. Contact Susan Menhard, Program Director at 314-58-7090 or [smenhard@starkloff.org](mailto:smenhard@starkloff.org) for more information.



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**Co-Directors: David Newburger and Colleen Starkloff**

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